



# Senator Bill FINKBEINER

Washington State Legislature ~ 45th Legislative District

Winter 2001



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*Dear neighbors:*

*Happy Holidays! As 2001 draws to a close, I want to express my gratitude for the support and feedback I've received from the constituents of the 45th District throughout the past year. When the Senate reconvenes on January 14, we will be facing some significant challenges.*

*Our national and state economies have slowed, and were dragged deeper into recession after the September 11 attacks. Unemployment is up, and our state faces a budget shortfall of over \$1 billion. As a result, we as Legislators will have our work cut out for us in Olympia.*

*I hope you'll read the information in this newsletter to better understand how I plan to represent you during these tough times. While balancing the budget will be a formidable challenge, I feel the time is right for the Legislature to tackle those problems head-on, in a non-partisan fashion.*

*Transportation also continues to be a thorn in every commuter's side. We were close to passing a plan last session, and we'll take another run at it again in 2002. I've enclosed a survey detailing some of the solutions being discussed. To help me best represent you, please take a couple of minutes to fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in Olympia. Your quick response will assure I know where you stand before session begins on January 14.*

*As always, don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns about the questionnaire or any other part of state government. You can contact me via mail, phone or e-mail. By sending back the survey you can also sign up for e-mail updates regarding transportation and state budget issues.*

*Thank you for the honor of serving you in the Washington State Senate.*

Senator Bill Finkbeiner

# It's YOUR budget

OUR NATION AS A WHOLE is struggling with a downturn in the economy. This is especially true in Washington state where unemployment rates are now the highest in the nation. More Boeing layoffs will continue to negatively influence those numbers.

Our challenge during the 2002 Legislative session will be to find ways to reduce the state budget to make up for a \$1.2 billion shortfall, while ensuring necessary public health, safety, and education programs remain intact.

This budget problem is not something that's solely a result of the Sept. 11 attacks on our country, or even the economic slowdown that preceded them. The budget approved last year for the 2001-03 biennium was already \$650 million more than the state anticipated we'd receive in revenues. It included spending state reserve funds to pay for ongoing programs. Many of us felt it was irresponsible to pass a budget that spent more than the state would

receive in tax revenues. Now our current budget situation shows what a mistake it was.

So what can be done to solve the problem? Governor Locke has publicly stated he won't raise taxes to cover the shortfall. I agree with the Governor that this should not be an option. The Legislature needs to find ways to curtail spending and streamline government regulations in this tough economic time.

The solution also needs to be long-term. We as Legislators can't use gimmicks or one-time band-aids to solve our budget problems. Now is the time to take a serious look at what cuts and reductions need to be made to make our budget a sustainable one for the future. It's time to make some tough choices about what functions government should continue to provide. We'll be taking a hard look at what programs are vital and which ones aren't. It won't be fun, but as you tighten your belt to weather this economic storm, your state government should be ready to do the same.

## Education needs to be protected

AS WE TAKE A LOOK at ways to balance the budget, one of my priorities is to protect education. Voters have approved measures to guarantee teacher salaries and reduce class sizes and the Legislature needs to keep that commitment.

I also believe there are important areas where we could be doing a better job in educating our children. Not enough time is spent working on basics, like reading and math, as too many other requirements are getting in the way. We need to find ways to stress the importance of these building blocks of education.

Funding the education system is an investment in the future of Washington state. I look at today's children knowing they represent the future leaders of our state and nation. I went to public school in Kirkland, and I want all children to receive the best education possible from our schools. Our education system needs to be protected, and as the ranking Republican member of the Education Committee, I'll continue to do that.

## It's time to work together

THIS PAST LEGISLATIVE SESSION was one of the most frustrating many Legislators said they'd ever seen. While the Senate managed to come together on some issues, the House's partisan politics kept a transportation package from seeing a vote, while the bickering between both sides of the aisle muddled the accomplishments that were made in 2001. The time is right for everyone to work closer together in 2002.

The Democrats now have control of the House and Senate, but both leads are slim. Only two seats separate the parties in the House, while the Senate gap is even slimmer with a 25-24 split. This means that the Legislature will have to work together as a whole to solve our problems.

The fact is we have enough challenges facing us this session without letting politics get in the way. We as legislators will be faced with some tough choices in the coming months as we try to balance the \$1.2 billion budget gap, while trying to protect education and pass a transportation package. To accomplish that, we are going to have to pull together; not only as a Legislature, but also you and I as citizens of Washington state.

*I look forward to serving you in the State Senate again for the coming year.*

# Transportation Survey

Shade circles like this: ●

Not like this: ○



1. A proposed regional transportation plan that would address our area's needs for more roads and additional transit options would cost the average family an additional \$50 per year. Would you pay that cost in exchange for a long-term transportation solution?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. Yes

☐☐

B. No

2. If the Legislature was to consider raising taxes for transportation, what is your opinion about putting it to a public vote?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. Yes, the public should be allowed to vote on it

☐☐

B. No, we elect lawmakers to represent us and they should determine what is best

☐☐

C. Undecided

3. I-405 is one of the most congested sections of highway in the United States. A regional I-405 Executive committee supports a plan that would create two additional lanes of traffic in each direction, increase bus and vanpool availability and frequency and build new HOV lanes. Would you support a plan like that?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. Yes

☐☐

B. No

☐☐

C. Undecided

4. Another idea being discussed includes building a light rail system along Highway 520 from the Eastside into Seattle. Would you use a light rail system of transit instead of driving your car if it was available?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. Yes

☐☐

B. No

5. How many miles do you normally drive per week?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. Up to 25 miles a week

☐☐

B. Between 25 and 50 miles a week

☐☐

C. Between 50 and 75 miles a week

☐☐

D. Between 75 and 100 miles a week

☐☐

E. More than 100 miles a week

6. If you commute to work, what mode of transportation do you usually use?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. Car

☐☐

B. Carpool

☐☐

C. Bus

☐☐

D. Bicycle

7. How long is your daily commute (one-way)?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. 15 minutes or less

☐☐

B. 15-30 minutes

☐☐

C. 30-45 minutes

☐☐

D. 45-60 minutes

☐☐

E. Over one hour

8. Would you like to receive updates on regional transportation plans and budget proposals that affect the 45th District?

VOTER 1

VOTER 2

☐☐

A. Yes

☐☐

B. No

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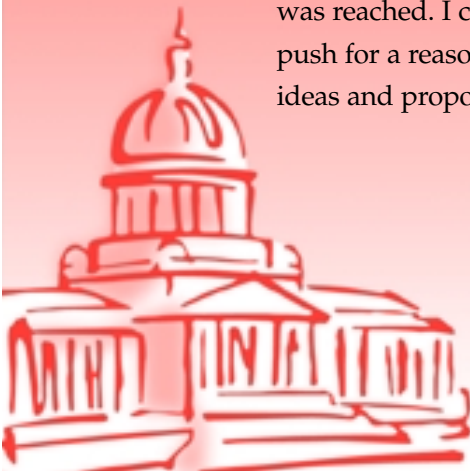


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AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, transportation was one of the most complex and frustrating issues we dealt with as senators in 2001. Even after numerous special sessions were called, no agreement was reached. I continue to believe that the status quo is not an option and will continue to push for a reasonable solution. Please answer the enclosed questions regarding some of the ideas and proposals to solve our transportation problems.



I look forward to receiving your response  
and **THANK YOU** for sharing  
your thoughts and ideas.



*Survey Enclosed*

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